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COMMUNIST GAINS IN ITALY UPSET U.S.

Kissinger Advises Dominant
Party to 'Revitalize' and Bar
Reds From Government

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 8Se.

Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and other top Administration officials are expressing growing concern over the Communist political gains in Italy and have been sending repeated signals to the dominant Christian Democratic Party to revitalize itself and keep the Communists from joining the national Government.

The issue has troubled Washington for more than a year, and the anxiety has grown in recent months because of the Communists' strength in last June's local elections and signs of further gains in the next parliamentary elections in 1977.

Mr. Kissinger's constant advice to Italian visitors has been described by one official as "revitalize, revitalize" and do everything possible to prevent the Communists from entering a governing coalition. Such a Communist role, even though the Italian Communists are regarded as moderate, would be viewed by Washington as a disaster for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the officials said.

Given the volatile state of Italian politics and the lack of public interest in this country about Italy's situation, the Administration has generally refrained from commenting publicly on Italian developments.

Warning to Committee

But Mr. Kissinger made an unusually pointed public statement about the Administration's concern in testifying before a House committee on Thursday.

Asked by a member of the House International Relations Committee whether Italy "could be lost to NATO" as the result of Communist political gains, Mr. Kissinger replied:

"We are disturbed by the dramatic gains by the Communist Party in June. Basically the United States cannot determine the domestic structure of Italy by its own initiative; basically the future of Italy is not an American foreign policy problem."

"But having said that, the United States hopes very much the Christian Democratic Party, which has been the governing party, revitalizes itself so that it can gain the necessary public support and a coalition can be put together by the democratic parties to prevent the entry into the government of the Communist Party of Italy."

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"Since the impact on NATO of having one of the major countries with a major Communist Party participation would be very serious, we're giving Italy as much advice and as much encouragement as we can."

When Mr. Kissinger spoke, Ambassador John A. Volpe was in Washington for consultations with President Ford and the State Department on the political situation in Italy, and Mr. Kissinger had just finished on Tuesday stressing the need for revitalization to Giulio Andreotti, the Italian Budget Minister, who was here with a parliamentary delegation.

Younger Leaders Advised

The Administration believes that the Christian Democrats, who replaced Amintore Fanfani as their party leader in July after the Communists came within three percentage points of the Christian Democrats in the local elections, must bring younger people into prominence and achieve a more dynamic image. Otherwise, the Administration believes, Italy runs the risk of having the Communists make such a strong showing in coming elections as to make their entry into the Government inevitable.

The American concern was reminiscent of the years immediately after World War II, when the Truman Administration feared that the Communists would win the elections in 1948. To prevent that, the United States poured millions of dollars into Italy, much of it through clandestine channels, to help the Christian Democrats win the crucial parliamentary vote.

Several nongovernmental experts believe that the Italian Communist Party should be brought into a coalition as it is independent of Moscow and Peking and run on democratic principles at home, where it controls several local administrations. But Mr. Kissinger and his aides believe that such a development would be a disaster for the West.

They have asserted that a Communist-influenced government would inevitably weaken Italy's ties to NATO further damaging the alliance's southern flank, already in trouble because of the unpredictable situation in Portugal, Spain, Greece and Turkey.

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